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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture

Office of Communications

Electronic Media Services

Washington, DC 20250-1340

Letter No. 2638

November 26, 1993

FLOOD DAMAGE FUNDS -- The remaining \$25 million dollars of the Emergency Wetlands Program has been requested by President Clinton for use on watershed protection systems damaged during midwest flooding. Last August \$35 million was distributed from the Program to States by USDA's Soil Conservation Service. In a related development, Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy, appointed by the President as long-term coordinator for Midwest flood recovery, toured flood damaged areas on November 22 & 23, and met with farmers in Illinois and Missouri. **Contact: Steve Kinsella (202) 720-4623.**

LEVEE REPAIR -- The Federal Interagency Task Force on Midwestern Flood Recovery is making available \$18 million for Midwest levee repairs. USDA's Soil Conservation Service says it will use the following criteria to prioritize levees for repair: the type of property protected by the levee; past performance of levee sponsors; past record of operations and maintenance; environmental impact; and local rules and regulations. SCS has authority for levees draining areas of less than 400 square miles. **Contact: Jeff Anliker (202) 720-3210.**

WHEAT -- Prices for high-protein bread wheat and good quality durum are being driven higher by the poor quality of spring wheat production. Lower-priced wheat will likely be fed to livestock. Increased imports are expected of durum, high-protein wheat and feed wheat. Compared to a year earlier, prices for durum and high protein spring wheat are expected to be much stronger during the planting period next spring. Acreage in 1994/95 is expected to be about the same as this year. **Contact: Ed Allen (202) 219-0840.**

FRUIT PRICES -- Moderately higher grower and retail prices are expected in 1994 for fresh-market apples, naval oranges, and grapefruit. Reduced domestic supplies will tend to boost prices, but imports from Chile, the main supplier of offseason fruits, could moderate the higher fruit prices next year. **Contact: Dennis Shields (202) 219-0884.**

MEAT CONSUMPTION -- Per capita consumption of beef is expected to equal 94 pounds in 1993. That is higher than chicken, 78 pounds per person, or pork, at 68 pounds. The ratio is also changing. Per capita consumption of poultry has nearly tripled in the last 25 years, while consumption of beef peaked in 1976. Pork figures have remained steady over the past decade. The increased consumption of chicken is attributed to lower retail prices than for beef or pork, and perceived health benefits. Total poultry and red meat per capita consumption set new records almost every year during the past 30 years, chiefly due to increased poultry consumption. **Contact: (202) 219-1286.**

INCREASING COTTON YIELDS -- Cotton lint yields averaged an increase of 293 pounds per acre when a cover crop of early-season winter rye was used with minimal plowing. USDA researchers found that compared to fields left fallow during the winter, surface mulch from the cover crop boosted yields by helping to retain moisture in the soil during the cotton growing season. **Contact: Philip Bauer (803) 669-5203.**

REPELLING WEEDS -- Tests conducted by USDA's Agricultural Research Service show that killing a cover crop immediately before planting soybeans can reduce weed biomass by 98 percent. Weeds were reduced 95 percent when the cover crop of hybrid sorghum-sundangrass was killed one week before bean planting. The longer the period between eliminating the cover crop and planting beans resulted in more weeds and reduced yields. The study shows that soybean farmers can tap the natural potential of cover crops to repel weeds, and cut herbicide use. **Contact: Reid Smelda (601) 686-5222.**

REDUCING CHEMICALS -- Herbicides can be reduced 75 percent on no-till corn by doubling the number of plants and narrowing the rows from 30 to 15 inches wide without sacrificing yields. USDA scientists report that the higher density of corn plants crowded out weeds by blocking sunlight. This approach could save farmers money and reduce the impact of herbicides on surface and ground water. Corn accounts for about 40 percent of the 500 million pounds of herbicide used each year on U.S. cropland. **Contact: John Teasdale (301) 504-5504.**

YOUNG FARMERS -- There has been a long-term trend in the reduction of farms in the United States, and an increase in the average age of farm operators, despite that fact that that each year an estimated 27,000 farms began operations by farmers under 35 years old. Low-interest operating and land purchase loans are available to beginning farmers who show potential for success in farming, but only 3,500 farmers have received subsidized loans since 1980. The subsidies have made little difference in attracting more entrants. The entry rates may be a reaction to the likelihood of lower lifetime earnings in farming than in other occupations, and a signal that the commercial farm sector is shifting to a more complex structure of specialization and resource pooling that can respond more rapidly to changes in volatile world markets. **Fred Gale (202) 219-0525.**

UNDERSTANDING TRADEOFFS -- Among the goals of U.S. farm programs is an attempt to affect the market price of farm produce by controlling its supply. A new publication, "A Model of Participation in U.S. Farm Programs," issued by USDA's Economic Research Service, shows that the effectiveness of supply control depends on the level of farmer participation, which in turn, depends on the expected benefit to producers. Participation in farm programs is voluntary. The study examines the tradeoffs between set-asides, designed to control supplies and increase market prices, and price supports, which encourage farmers to increase supply and depress market prices. The tradeoffs between set-asides and price supports depends on the level of farmer participation in the program, and on the level of capital stocks in the farm sector which tends to soften or offset the effects of policy changes. To order a copy dial 1-800-999-6779. The cost is \$9.00 a copy. **Contact: Robbin Shoemaker (202) 219-0404.**

SOCIALIZATION AT MEALTIME -- Several studies show that eating alone is a common factor behind poor nutrition among older people. A low-calorie intake was the most frequent deficit among elderly women. It was linked to eating alone and taking multiple medications. A high-fat intake was the main liability among men. Eating together can be important to help assure that the elderly obtain adequate intake. **Contact: Katherine Tucker (617) 556-3351.**

AGRICULTURE OUTLOOK CONFERENCE -- Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy will open USDA's 70th Agriculture Outlook Conference, Nov. 30 - Dec. 1 with a keynote address on new priorities for USDA and the future of U.S. agriculture. The first day will be transmitted on C-band satellite, Galaxay 3, transponder 24, beginning at 9:00 a.m. EST.

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1903 -- Brenda Curtis talks with nutrition experts about making healthy changes in holiday eating. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1385 -- Delicious and healthy holidays; leaner holiday meals; give a cookbook; food safety at the salad bar; the yin and yang of ginseng. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE FEATURES #1895 -- Turkey producers wrap up a good year; inventory of cattle on feed; soybean loan rate; a changing role in world markets; controlling soil erosion. (Weekly reel of features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1648 -- Sour oranges tell story; CO2 & vitamin C; no net warming; crops vs. weeds; higher CO2 & animals. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Tuesday, December 7, crop and weather update; Thursday, December 9, U.S. crop production, world ag supply and demand; Friday, December 10, dairy outlook, world ag and grain production, world oilseed situation, world cotton situation; Monday, December 13, ag income outlook; Tuesday, December 14, sugar outlook, crop and weather update. **These are the USDA reports we know about in advance. Our Newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling.**

USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359, COMREX ENCODED (202) 720-2545.
Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

FEATURES -- DeBoria Janifer reports on high tech rice. Pat O'Leary reports on shoreline erosion control. Lynn Wyvill reports on the National Parasite Collection.

ACTUALITIES -- USDA chief meteorologist Norton Strommen on the latest weather and crop conditions; USDA economist Leland Southard on the livestock and poultry outlook.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- DeBoria Janifer reports on Charleston Hot peppers; Pat O'Leary on a USDA program to share plant genetic resources with other countries; and Lynn Wyvill on timber bridge research.

EVERY OTHER WEEK -- Agriculture Update with anchors Eric Parsons and Lori Spiczka. 4:30 of USDA farm program information in news desk format with B-roll.

Available on Satellite Galaxy 4, channel 23, audio 6.2 or 6.8, downlink frequency 4160 MHz.: Thursdays from 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EDT, Saturdays from 10 - 10:30 a.m., EDT, and Mondays from 8 - 8:30 a.m., EDT.

OFFMIKE

CATTLE PRODUCERS...in the region served by **John Morris** (KSAL, Salina, KS) are concerned about experiencing another disastrous winter. John says the generally low quality feed being stored is prompting producers to learn more about livestock nutrition and feeding rations. The conflicting weather needs of producers was evident this fall in John's area: the wheat crop was emerging and needed moisture; milo was ready for harvest and needed dry weather.

ILLINOIS CORN REFERENDUM...is in the mail to 179,000 farmers, says **Willard Severns** (WSOY Decatur, IL), seeking to raise the checkoff from 1/4 to 1/2 cent. Ballots must be returned by Dec. 14. Willard says the increase will likely be approved. Many producers in Willard's region are seeing bottom line black ink this year with above average yields from their fields and good prices.

TRANSFORMATION...of the Texas Agri-Business Network, Dallas, into the Texas State News Network has been completed. **Lee McCoy** has been promoted to farm director. **Scot Harrison** has been named assistant farm director.

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VOMITOXIN...is a major concern for pork producers in the area served by **Mike Murphy** (KSUM/KFMC, Fairmont, MN). It has been found in stored corn. Mike says yields this year have been disastrous. The region normally produces 30 million bushels of corn, but got only 5 million this year. The soybean crop was only half of its normal 6 million bushels. Producers in Mike's listening area have placed 55,000 acres into the 0-92 program.

RIVER CITY FARM SHOW...in Moline, IL, was covered live by **Rick Pierce** (WGEN, Geneseo, IL). Operating Tuesday through Thursday, biggest attendance was on Wednesday when the show remained open until 8 p.m. instead of closing 4 p.m.

CONGRATULATIONS...to **Ed Slusarczyk** (Ag Radio Network, Utica, NY). Ed received the Champion of Democracy Award, presented at the Polish embassy in Washington, D.C., for his work in promoting and developing agricultural businesses in Poland.

VIC POWELL
Office of Communications